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RR RUEHBZ RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHTO #1033/01 2601607
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FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0725
INFO RUEHXQ/EU COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0505
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MAPUTO 001033

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/16/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [MZ](#)

SUBJECT: DONORS' RESOLVE HARDENS IN ELECTIONS CONFLICT

REF: A. MAPUTO 1026 (SIPDIS)
[B.](#) MAPUTO 1012 (SIPDIS)
[C.](#) MAPUTO 1009 (SIPDIS)
[D.](#) MAPUTO 1007 (SIPDIS)

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Todd Chapman, Reasons 1.4(b+d)

[¶](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: In advance of a periodic formal political dialogue between the leadership of the 'G-19' international donor countries and the GRM, twenty-one chiefs of mission from Europe and North America convened on September 16 to review growing worries about the legitimacy of October 28 general elections in Mozambique after opposition parties were suddenly disqualified from running in many legislative races (reftels). They broadly expressed concern about the state of play and agreed to continue pressing the GRM to allow opposition parties to participate in elections. At the dialogue itself on September 17, donors delivered a tough and very public message to three GRM ministers. This strong statement firmly reinforced to the GRM that the entire donor community is concerned and highlights that Mozambique's reputation and budget support could be at stake. The Constitutional Court announced it must make its decision known by September 28, and FRELIMO insiders report to Emboffs that efforts are underway to try and find a graceful way out of this elections impasse. END SUMMARY.

BRITAIN PRESSES ELECTIONS CONCERNS

[¶](#)2. (C) The British Ambassador began the meeting of twenty-one international donors on September 16 by saying that the senior official for Africa from the Foreign Office in London, Adam Wood, had just visited Maputo, and had met with Minister of the Presidency Antonio Sumbana to raise democracy concerns. The Ambassador said that Sumbana had immediately launched into a lengthy statement on elections--almost a 'pre-emptive strike.' Sumbana indicated that he had just spoken with President Armando Guebuza, and that the GRM was taking the elections issue seriously. Interestingly, he said Sumbana made no mention of the need to follow laws, nor the elections authority, nor the courts--the usual responses from GRM so far on this issue. Sumbana agreed with Wood that it would better for ruling party FRELIMO if all parties participated in the elections, and clearly understood that this was an issue of governance that could undermine the legitimacy of the elections and the confidence of the public. Nonetheless, Sumbana complained that the international community was too demanding: "we give a finger, and you want an arm," he said, "and you must understand that Mozambique is still a young democracy."

[¶](#)3. (C) The British Ambassador said that the HMG's analysis is that the GRM has clearly received the message that the international community is extremely concerned about the

elections and now the FRELIMO party must make its own internal calculations on how to proceed. He urged that the international community make one additional statement on the elections within a day, and then simply repeat that message continuously. Otherwise, Wood left Mozambique believing that there was no need to do anything dramatic at this juncture as it is still early in the campaign and we are on the right track, and we needed to save some actions for later.

SWISS SAY ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE CUT

¶14. (C) The Swiss Ambassador noted that opposition party MDM candidates have been excluded from 55 of 75 districts for the provincial elections for being unable to show proof of residence in those areas--even though GRM offices were refusing to issue these certificates. As such, he said it was fait accompli that FRELIMO would control all provincial assemblies. He said that Swiss budget support to Mozambique had been allocated by Bern, but was not yet approved, and would only be so in October. The Ambassador said that if democracy concerns are not addressed, it will be difficult for Bern to approve budget assistance for the coming year.

EU OBSERVATION MISSION QUESTIONED

¶15. (SBU) After several EU ambassadors questioned whether the EU Electoral Observation Mission should continue forward, the

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EU Commission representative responded that the Mission was wholly independent, following strict guidelines; the decision to cancel could only be made in Brussels. She urged the group not to undermine the mission before it really begins, but noted that it was important that Ambassadors inform observation mission representatives of the latest events since the mission would look not only at election day issues but the whole process. The representative ended by opining that it was deeply unfortunate that the GRM had invited the EU mission extremely late and only after considerable pressure by member states.

THE FIGHTING IRISH (AND DUTCH AND ITALIANS)

¶16. (C) The Irish Ambassador emphasized that civil society cannot ignore that MDM's exclusion is the main driver of concerns--if a partial reversal doesn't include the populous swing provinces of Zambezia and Nampula, any solution will be mere tokenism. He noted that in 2004, there were also problems of voter tabulation but the elections generally represented the will of the people--it's not clear that would be the case this time, he said, and we need to draw attention to the representation issue.

¶17. (C) After the Dutch ambassador said that he felt that the international community was being manipulated and that many press statements by Ambassadors appeared to be purposely unreported in the media, the Italian ambassador indicated that he believed the international community's direct message to President Guebuza the week prior made clear that we were not happy with the president of the elections authority (CNE), and that the appeals process for disqualified opposition parties to the Constitutional Court (CC) was not transparent. He noted that he had just met with representatives of respected NGO Electoral Observatory (OE), who think that a legal way out for CNE to rescind the disqualifications can still be found.

CANADIANS AND NORDICS ON THE OFFENSE

¶8. (C) The Canadian Ambassador warned that he did not want to see Mozambique suffer five more years of 'bad democracy' simply because the international donors failed to respond forcefully in a window of 48 hours. Ambassadors from Sweden and Norway indicated that they had just met with advisors to Mozambican President Armando Guebuza, who clearly recognized that the GRM has a serious problem. Both said that Mozambique's Ambassador to the Nordic countries had already been briefed about the meeting the previous week with President Guebuza. The Finnish Ambassador closed the meeting by agreeing, as the current chair of the donor group, to ensure that elections would be the major priority of the upcoming political dialogue with the GRM the following day, noting that the British Ambassador as incoming Chair and the Irish Ambassador as the outgoing would also participate as a "Troika."

IN GRM DIALOGUE, DONORS DRAW A LINE IN THE SAND

¶9. (C) In the formal political dialogue on September 17 with the Ministers of Planning, Finance, and Agriculture, along with the governor of the Central Bank, the British Ambassador explained that the disqualification of opposition parties gave a bad impression to capitals--that's why the senior-most HMG official for Africa had just visited. He noted that DFID had an evaluation team on the ground to consider future assistance levels for Mozambique, and the current events would play a role in the evaluation. The Irish Ambassador told the Ministers that "we (donors) are not stupid--this is not the first election with irregularities. It is quite clear that only one party benefits from these actions, and only one opposition party is especially hurt. Without adequate explanation, we will be left to form our own conclusions." The Finnish Ambassador said that donors and civil society needed to see CNE, CC and GRM decisions made in a clear, transparent, and quick manner. After a weak intervention by the Planning minister that touched (once again) on the need to respect the decision-making process of the Constitutional Court, the Troika gave a press conference to more than 30 journalists observing that the credibility of elections could be undermined if opposition parties could not

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participate fully in the process.

COMMENT: DONORS (FINALLY) UNITED ON TOUGH MESSAGE

¶10. (C) With several international donors delivering tough messages, both to the press and behind closed doors, the GRM grasps that the entire donor community is concerned about the elections process. It also now becomes more difficult for a few belligerent press outlets to portray the United States as being the only one seriously concerned about the issue as others have become more vocal. We remain convinced that FRELIMO has strong political sway over the CNE and CC, but with European donors opening the once taboo topic of reducing direct budget support and even questioning the value of elections observation, the GRM understands that the decision to disqualify opposition parties from the October 28 elections has jeopardized the two things it values most--its international reputation and the country's pocketbook--and may work to reverse the ill-advised disqualifications. The Constitutional Court announced it must make its decision known by September 28, and FRELIMO insiders report to Emboffs that efforts are underway to try and find a graceful way out of this unanticipated impasse.

CHAPMAN